

## Christmas Present

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Summary: T'was the night before Christmas, and all through the house, Bobby Fulbright was wide awake and stirring quite intensely as he tried to figure out just how he was going to express the true depth of his feelings to Prosecutor Blackquill when he saw him tomorrow. [Blackbright Christmas fic - in April. Gift for Evil Icing]

## Christmas Present

There was nothing Bobby Fulbright liked quite as much as justice, but one thing he liked almost as much was Christmas!

It really was the most wonderful time of the year. The twinkling lights and candy canes, all the tinsel and hot cocoa and cheerful songs; Bobby couldn't get enough of them. It wasn't just about these symbols in and of themselves, though; it was about what they represented â€" acceptance and love, sharing and compassion. Really, there wasn't another day of the year that Bobby could feel quite as confident that all the wrongs in the world would one day be erased â€" and what could be more definitive of justice than that?

One of Bobby's favorite things about Christmas (and it was so hard to choose!) was all the movies and specials airing on almost any TV channel he turned to. They always put him in the mood to spread the holiday spirit with those most in need of it, which was perhaps the only thing he enjoyed about Christmas more than the movies and specials themselves.

Of all the Christmas specials he liked (and really, there wasn't a single one Bobby could think of that he didn't like), his favorite one of all was currently playing on the small TV nestled in the corner of his room. He'd already watched it three times this year, but could never bear to watch anything else when he saw it was listed to air.

"You'll never fit in!" boomed Hermey's grumpy boss, as he reamed out the elf for admitting his desire to become a dentist and not a toy-maker.

Bobby frowned, wishing for nothing more than the ability to magically teleport himself into that fictional claymation world, so he could give Hermey's boss, and Donner, and everyone else who was so downright \_rude\_ a good talking-to about what a disservice to justice they did by being so mean-spirited.

It always got to him, poor Rudolph and Hermey being treated so unkindly just for being different and awkward, when all they wanted to do was help others. And those misfit toys! How could anyone be so cruel to a spotted elephant or swimming bird, \_abandon\_ them simply for not being "normal"?

This year, more than ever before, seeing the toys lament about their rejection and forming a community based around it â€" it struck an even deeper chord within him.

Because for the whole of his life, there hadn't been anything Bobby Fulbright liked more than justice, except this Christmas there was some\_one\_whom he could rightly place in that category.

In a way, Prosecutor Blackquill was like his very own misfit toy, cast aside and convinced he was unlovable, unfixable. But also like the misfit toys, Bobby would make sure that Prosecutor Blackquill found the warmth and support he deserved; a permanent home, that over the past couple months had come to be none other than deep within Bobby's heart.

He reached to his bedside table, mindlessly picking up the last Christmas cookie from the plate full of them he'd brought along to snack on as he watched Rudolph. Being Christmas Eve, milk and cookies were a tradition, even if Bobby had outgrown the whole part of it dictating he leave them out overnight.

At least this Christmas, much like Santa had his elves and reindeer to assist him, Bobby had his own little helper.

A tiny gray ball of fluff â€" well, not quite as tiny anymore â€" scrambled up on his legs, mewing for attention.

"Hey, buddy! What's up, you can't wait for Christmas either? Here you go!" He reached back over to tip the glass of milk he had, splashing a couple drops onto the plate where the cookies had been. Carefully exchanging the glass for the plate, he lowered it in front of the kitten and let the little guy lap at the creamy puddle.

He'd found Roscoe and the rest of his littermates about two months ago, hungry and cold in a box behind the storage units sitting on the edge of his complex's property. They were only a few days old, judging by their fine fur and ever-blinking eyes, and Bobby hadn't been late to work in over a decade, but this was well worth breaking his streak for.

As much as he wanted to, he couldn't keep \_all\_ of the kittens. So after taking them to a shelter to get checked out, he decided to keep the smallest, most helpless one of all, and made sure to call the

shelter every day to ensure the rest had been adopted (and within a week, he'd gotten the good news they all had been). The runt, with his sweet face and patchy white paws, looked very much like the cat Bobby's grandparents had owned when he was growing up, and so was given the same name: Roscoe.

Roscoe mewed again, satisfied with his treat, and remained curled up on Bobby's leg while he watched the rest of \_Rudolph\_. As the snowman narrator sang about having a holly, jolly Christmas, Bobby's thoughts turned to the fact that Christmas would be here in only a few hours, and he'd \_still\_ yet to finish his gift for Prosecutor Blackquill!

With a heavy sigh, Bobby rose from the bed, sending Roscoe darting away. He moved to his dresser, where part of the gift in question sat, taunting him: an everyday Christmas card. If Prosecutor Blackquill were here, he'd be ridiculing Bobby for wasting so much time and frustration on such an insignificant task. A Christmas card already contained a message, he would say. What point was there in \_adding\_ anything personal to it?

But that was just it â€" there was so \_much\_ of a point! - because of \_how\_ personal Bobby felt his relationship with Prosecutor Blackquill was. He \_had\_ to think of not just \_something\_, but the \_perfect\_ thing to write in it.

At the same time, he didn't want it to be flowery, what Prosecutor Blackquill would roll his eyes at and label sentimental gibberish. Well, he \_did\_, but... but he \_couldn't\_!

They'd been so, so careful. They \_had\_ to be; if anyone around them suspected what was \_actually\_ going on in the moments Bobby and Prosecutor Blackquill were alone, they would be separated, and that meant losing everything they'd both worked so hard for.

So, since no one knew - since no one \_could\_ know - sometimes Bobby felt even Prosecutor Blackquill didn't \_truly\_ know just how much he carried him in his every waking thoughts, in all he said and did and felt.

He really did \_try\_ to be clear with Prosecutor Blackquill, about how dedicated he was and how this was more than a professional partnership to him. But he understood, sadly, that it would take much more reinforcement - constantly, even, over the course of the rest of his life â€" for Simon to accept he was worth caring about.

And that's when it struck him, almost as keenly as the moment he'd initially realized that what he felt towards Prosecutor Blackquill ran stronger than just the mutual respect and trust a prosecutor and his detective should share.

He picked up a pen, opened the card, and proceeded to write down \_exactly\_ what he wanted to say.

\* \* \*

><p>Today was Christmas.<p>

This was the first thought that struck Simon when he was roused by the warden after a fitful night tossing and turning, lost in a

chaotic whirl of violent, provocative waking dreams.

And if Simon hadn't thought that immediately, he would have moments later when Fool Bright appeared on the other side of his cell looking even more absurd than he normally did. His striped sweater was decorated with dozens of little appliqu  gingerbread men, and his golden hair was covered by a long, floppy, green-and-red felt cap trimmed with tiny jingly bells, the type an elf was typically depicted wearing.

Yet, Simon couldn't help but smile â€" or, at least start to; it probably wasn't much, especially compared to the one Fool Bright was sporting.

Still, the festivity of the holidays were no reason to be so impractical â€" not that Fool Bright ever provided a true reason for many of his senseless actions (for example, the relationship he had cultivated with Simon).

"...Why are you wearing a sweater? Isn't it nearly seventy degrees outside?" It had been unseasonably warm yesterday when Simon had visited Taka, and he couldn't imagine it'd cooled off that quickly.

"Because it's Christmas, Sir, and I've got the holiday spirit! That's why I'm here, to spread Christmas cheer to one and all!" Fool Bright saluted, causing the bells along the brim of his cap to jingle. "And you could definitely use some."

"I see. So that explains the..." Simon's gaze traveled to the large tin Fool Bright carried under his other arm.

Unlocking the barred door, Fool Bright slid it open with one long creaking groan. "It sure does! I heard you've been good this year, so that means..." He presented the tin to Simon. "Fresh-baked cookies! I just made them yesterday."

"You obviously have questionable sources, Fool Bright, but... I..." Simon took the tin, removing the polished red lid to find quite a colorful and sprinkle-coated assortment of cookies. "These are all for me?"

"Well, no, of course not, Sir." Fool Bright picked out a cookie for himself, and Simon followed suit. "I'm going down to the precinct in a bit to share these with the officers who have to work today!"

"Ever the altruist, you are," Simon said between bites of cookie. "I'm sure you're atop Saint Nicholas's 'Nice' list."

"Speaking of Santa..." Fool Bright wiped at his mouth before reaching to his back pocket. "You know, since most of the gifts he'd try to deliver here would be contraband, he couldn't bring you anything. But I got you something to make up for it!"

Simon's heart leapt. He had explicitly instructed Fool Bright that he did not require nor want a Christmas gift, but that was honestly all because he did not have any way to reciprocate. He'd almost foolishly tried to soften the blow by telling Fool Bright "Maybe next Christmas", but for him, there was no next Christmas.

"Fool Bright, I-" His words died as the something was whipped from Fool Bright's back pocket and thrust in his face.

A card.

Brows furrowed with curiosity, Simon placed the cookie tin down between them before taking the envelope and opening it. The card was simple enough, featuring a happy, cartoon snowman with cherubic woodland critters surrounding him. Beneath them in a fancy embossed script was the platitude of "Peace on Earth, good will to men." So very Fool Bright, in every way.

Inside, Simon found nothing more than another "Merry Christmas", and a short message, written in Fool Bright's loopy scrawl.

"Remember what I told you." The words left his lips with far less exuberance than he suspected Fool Bright had written them with. "How very... cryptic of you, Fool Bright."

"Haha, not at all, Sir! You know by now what you should always keep in mind, even when I'm not here: In justice we trust!"

"Yes, of course." What a strange, and yet, not entirely unpredictable sentiment for Fool Bright to assert through a Christmas card. Except, Simon had wondered if maybe a card to him, specifically, might include something slightly more... well, just more. "Of course. Do you have any other plans for the day?"

"Oh, I certainly do, Sir! I'm going to see my grandma and make her a nice little Christmas dinner, for just the two of us!" Fool Bright checked his watch, frowning. "Gosh, I hope I have enough time; the center's almost an hour away, and I still have to swing by the precinct, like I said."

Ah, yes, Fool Bright's beloved grandparents â€" well, just his grandmother, now. Even if she no longer had any recollection of him, nor would she recall his visit even minutes after he departed, Simon knew Fool Bright cherished any opportunity to spend time with the woman who helped raised him to be such an upstanding individual.

"Then, far be it from me to keep you here any longer. Thank you for stopping by, Fool Bright, and for your..." He lifted the card. "You've completed your mission handily, and filled me with the Christmas cheer."

"Great! And hey, make sure you think about your New Year's resolution; I'll be back later this week so we can discuss it!"

"Er... of course." Simon hesitated, glancing around to ensure no one else was anywhere within the vicinity of the cell. They weren't, so Simon made to strike before either the warden or his nerves reappeared. "Fool Bright, I thought... perhaps, since it is Christmas and... er, as you said, spreading the spirit, joy, all that rubbish, that you might not be adverse to... er, that is, if I... "

Simon shifted his body that the space between them closed, his head dropping as his lips moved towards their target.

His advance was interrupted by Fool Bright's arms circling him in a hug.

A hug that was too strong and enthusiastic. Which was an odd thing to think, considering this was Fool Bright and that was exactly how Simon would expect hugs from him to be like â€" if he hadn't experienced gentler, more careful ones in the past.

Still, Simon hugged him back â€" or, at least placed his arms around him fleetingly, what could generally pass for a hug.

Fool Bright pulled away, the bells on his hat jingling wildly. "Thank you so much, Sir!" He picked up the cookie tin, and before leaving the cell, turned to salute Simon one final time. "Merry Christmas to all and, remember, in justice we trust!"

"Merry Christmas, Fool Bright." Simon whispered after his detective had exited, sinking like a stone upon his slab of a bed.

The warmth from Fool Bright's hug lingered momentarily, then, much like Simon's hopes for the day, evaporated.

Why...? Was it so selfish for him to have wanted more? He hadn't foreseen their time today turning into anything sexual (not that he'd have argued if it did), but he had ached for even the slightest affectionate gesture from Fool Bright. Maybe a kiss while Fool Bright's hand rested softly on his cheek (and some joke about mistletoe winding its way in). Or even just a brief squeeze of Simon's arm, a favorite intimation of Fool Bright's, because he knew it gave Simon a sense of security without feeling trapped; that someone had him, willingly and firmly.

Something. Anything more than an impersonal, almost mechanical, hug. It'd been some time since they'd really been together â€" a full month, actually. Fool Bright, charitable as he was, had taken so many of his fellow officers' shifts so they could spend time with their loved ones during this busy season.

At least, that was the explanation given for his shortened and infrequent visits, and there was no former precedent for Simon to not take Fool Bright at his word.

Even more so, they'd had such a nice time together on Thanksgiving - or, so Simon had thought.

Although Simon had expected Fool Bright to be off with his grandmother on Thanksgiving, Fool Bright surprised him by showing up to the prison unannounced, along with a selection of Thanksgiving standards from the local supermarket to share.

Under the stipulation he would be shackled, Fool Bright persuaded the warden to allow Simon to join him for a few hours in the recreation room so they could dine together.

The rec room was a place typically reserved to reward inmates who had been on good behavior. Simon never put much effort into gaining access to it; he found it all patronizing â€" as if they really had anything in this pit to find joy in - and hardly worth the shallow distraction it provided. But it was a suitable enough location for a

private meal with its battered, dusty sofas and a coffee table. A shelf filled with books and board games sat in the corner, and an antiquated but functioning television provided background noise that was almost musical compared to the dripping pipes and chattering rats Simon was subjected to in his cell.

As they ate their stuffing and green beans and pre-carved turkey (well, Simon passed on the turkey), Simon had inquired about Fool Bright's unscheduled presence. Fool Bright informed him that his grandmother's senior center was holding a Thanksgiving meal over the weekend, a more convenient time for families to visit, leading him to then state, in his ever-earnest way, that he just "wanted to be with what he was most thankful for" and Simon teased him about not knowing anyone could like stuffing that much.

But the most memorable aspect of all had been that, besides the food, Fool Bright had also brought a DVD of one of Simon's favorite Studio Jiburi movies, which Simon knew Fool Bright had no knowledge about, except for the fact that surely Simon hadn't watched it since his sentencing.

It'd led to Simon talking at length about the other anime series and movies he so adored. He couldn't recall the last time he'd been so talkative, particularly about these topics. He'd learned to silence himself about them in his adolescent years when he was mocked mercilessly by his peers and even Aura about how "nerdy" or "immature" he was for finding joy and inspiration in such things.

But Fool Bright had seemed so attentive, even... interested, asking Simon questions to get him to elaborate more on the plots and his favorite characters. Had he just been humoring him, and this whole time planned to slowly withdraw? Did he wish to ease their dynamic back to what it had been now that this other side of Simon â€" not the one who needed the help Fool Bright was eager to give, but the one craving a genuine connection â€" had come to light?

Simon had thought, for the longest time, that the only thing more dishonorable than a Samurai with a broken blade was one with a broken will. Which was exactly what he'd had, thoroughly convinced that he would never regain it, and then â€" then his Fool Bright had come along.

Fool Bright, who'd patched up all those innumerable cracks with his kindness and patience, none of which Simon deserved.

Clearly. Perhaps Fool Bright had finally realized that as well.

Fool Bright was always so adamantly pleading that Simon place all his faith in justice, to the point of reminding him via a Christmas card. But now, it seemed, Simon would have done better to instead remember what he'd told himself, over and over and over again, about this budding relationship between himself and Fool Bright.

One way or another, it will end.

\* \* \*

><p>Bobby grinned, pleased with his succinct but <em>perfect</em> message, and licked the envelope to seal it. Setting the envelope

down, he nearly started to get ready for bed, but paused, debating if he should really peek at Prosecutor Blackquill's gift again. Oh, he'd done so every night since buying it, what was one more?

Opening the corner dresser drawer, he pushed aside the piles of partnerless socks he couldn't bear to throw away, and wiggled loose the panel serving as a false back to the drawer. There was a soft velour pouch, and in that pouch was a case containing Prosecutor Blackquill's gift. Bobby popped the lid, smiling at the happiness he knew this would bring Simon.

He'd searched high-and-low, and finally after days of browsing online, had managed to find an exact replica of the sunglasses worn by one of Prosecutor Blackquill's most favorite characters: Bosch from the show *Trygan*. Prosecutor Blackquill had told him all about Bosch and lots of other anime characters he liked when they'd spent Thanksgiving together, and just the way Simon had been so... alive and passionate â€" smiling! - when he did so, Bobby knew that these shows and characters had a huge influence and emotional impact on him, more than words could properly convey.

And while Bobby would've never thought to wear a pair of sunglasses like this himself, he had to admit they had a distinct flair to them. The small circular lenses were gold with an orangey tint, and the shiny, sturdy arms were jagged, reminding Bobby somewhat of Taka's sharp talons whenever the hawk dive-bombed towards him.

Sure, he wouldn't need them right now, but in the coming weeks, Simon would have his very own cases again! And he'd have to go out with Bobby to investigate crime scenes, of course, so he'd need practical accessories, like sunglasses.

Bobby couldn't wait for those investigations â€" seeking justice together all while looking very stylish doing so! â€" nor could he wait for Simon's reaction when he gave him the sunglasses tomorrow.

Because he could see it now, playing out before him. "Merry Christmas, Sir!" he'd say, as he handed Prosecutor Blackquill the slim case. Prosecutor Blackquill would grumble or harrumph like he always did but he would open it and be so taken aback that his Fool Bright had purchased him something as unique and thoughtful as these sunglasses, that he would stare and stare and stare some more, in a confused silence.

That silence, and that stare accompanying it, would be nothing more than a demand for an explanation. One prompting Bobby to tell him, simply, "I love you."

And then â€" this was the best part! â€" his card and the short request within, would have not only have double meaning, but all the meaning in the world. Something, Bobby hoped, that Prosecutor Blackquill could turn to on those nights when sleep never came, when even the shadows of his cell weren't as dark as the worries and fear endlessly plaguing him.

At least, it was thoughts about Simon, whom Bobby considered the most noble and selfless man he'd ever known â€" who was worth loving and being loved by in return â€" that kept him going when it seemed his pursuit of justice was futile, an all but obsolete belief given the



state of the current legal system.

He moved his badge so it was on top of the card " that way there was absolutely \_no chance\_ he'd forget to bring it!

But the box he slipped back into the drawer, and replaced the false panel. Normally, Bobby would use this compartment solely for confidential case files he brought home. Prosecutor Blackquill's present was definitely on the same tier of importance, in his opinion. It would be safe here.

He didn't \_need\_ to hide it, of course, to keep it \_safe\_ or anything close to it. No one ever visited him, and certainly not his bedroom, but something about how special it was to him; it felt the right thing to do, to keep it tucked away from any harm. You guard what's important to you, just like he would always ensure Prosecutor Blackquill was well-protected from those who sought to treat him unfairly, who would rather turn a blind eye to justice and sacrifice an innocent man if it meant taking the easy road.

Suddenly there was a disruptive noise " not very \_loud\_ or alarming, just something Bobby couldn't quite place at first until he remembered the tree out in the living room, that he'd put up and decorated only last week. Better late than never, but he'd been so busy at work, volunteering to stay extra hours so his fellow officers could take time off to spend with their families.

It was probably Roscoe playing with the ornaments again " Bobby had told him numerous times to \_stop\_ batting at the tree, but it wasn't like kittens had any tendency to listen. And Roscoe was just so adorable with his big yellow eyes, Bobby couldn't ever really be harsh when he scolded him.

He shut the drawer with a sigh, sorely wanting to just turn in already " it was so \_late\_ and if he'd been a kid, he would have been incredibly nervous, at this point, that Santa would skip his place over, since Santa knew when he was sleeping and when he was awake.

But he couldn't allow Roscoe to run about all night and get after the tree (or the fish, even though Bobby had moved them to a much higher shelf). Much like a defender of justice, a pet owner must also be ready to act, any hour of any day.

He'd just go scoop the kitten up, bring him back into his room so they could both get a good night's sleep.

And then Bobby could wake up to spend Christmas with Prosecutor Blackquill.

\* \* \*

><p><em>This was an idea that came to me two days ago when BS-ing with <em>\_\*\*Evil Icing\*\*\_ about Fulbright headcanons, such as the idea that he would just LOVE Christmas. Anyway, since I'm a horrible person, I took such an adorable idea and made it into this fic. As always, feedback is welcome and appreciated! Thanks for reading! :]\_

End  
file.